



THIS STORY IS COPYRIGHT PROTECTED 6/9/2014 PETER JAMES BERTINO AUTHOR; AND MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE AUTHOR

1

Qcalc Coordinates 33.35776-104.57652
Roswell, NM 03_02_2002

Howard Batemen woke on the last day of his life with the sun, he was lanky standing over six feet tall, but the cancer made him hunch over in pain giving him the appearance of shortness. His lungs and part of his liver were riddled with cancerous tumors the size of golf balls, beside him was a thin green oxygen tank to help him suck down air the way he had Camels.

He once had a full white beard and long silvery hair, the chemo therapy had turned his hair into straw and his beard was gone mostly making his face look like a lawn with stunted silvery grass. He was lanky standing over six feet tall, the cancer made him hunch over in pain giving him the appearance of shortness.

He quit smoking almost ten years ago, but the damage had already been done. He had almost given it up completely, until that summer of 1947. They didn't know it could kill you then. Howdy shook his head in disdain as he rose from his bead.

“Nothin but idiots wearing butcher coats.” he rasped.

He pushed back the few strands of hair he still had out of his long face and slowly made his way to the window and thought back to that night in June. It was a sight he never forgot, like the time Lake Erie caught fire when he was a boy an awesome but terrible sight.

What happened in 1947 was quicker, a green bolt of lightning that put maybe two dozen blue holes the size of manhole covers all over the area surrounding his tiny house that vanished after a few moments. He turned back to his nightstand where his manuscript laid, he had spent the last six months writing things down.

Not everything though, he was sure someone kept an eye on him the government maybe. It was a feeling that would nag him constantly but recently he felt like it was getting worse. Sometimes he would use the phone he would hear faint clicks and pops, he'd seen enough episodes of Dragnet and FBI files to know he was being bugged.

2

The occasional UFO buff would come around too, given that this was Roswell aka UFO capital of the world he was surprised more people didn't show up.

He'd talk to them and tell them all the same thing, what aliens? It wasn't hard for him to lie to those people. The first man he met after the crash however was not UFO buff or a sightseer. He was dressed like a college professor dressed in a corduroy jacket with suede elbow patches, carrying a pipe he never lit up.

He arrived a few days after the original story hit the wires. He looked to be about fifty with hair that was gray with strands of white and combed to the side, his eyes were like icebergs, that said he'd brook no bullshit.

"I understand you own this land." he said through thin lips that frowned.

"Yes, who might you be." Howdy asked with a friendly tone.

But he didn't answer, beside him stood a soldier with Sargent stripes on his sleeve holding a large machine gun at chest level.

"Hey sarge," he said with a smile.

He silently glared at Howdy, as the pipe carrying man looked around with a purpose. He spoke with quick sharp words that left Howdy with goosebumps despite the weather.

"Are you chilly, Mr Batemen?" said the man with the pipe who was looking in the distance.

"Your army buddy there is making me a little nervous with his toy, there's no need for it."

The man faced Howdy and wiggled the pipe, the Sargent lowered his rifle and headed for the black sedan that brought them here.

“Did you serve, Mr Batemen?” he asked after five minutes of chilly silence.

“No, I was born with the flattest feet in Pennsylvania.” he said lifting up a bare foot with
3
a sheepish grin.

“I know.” he said which brought more goose bumps to his arms.

Hearing the man speak the way he did made Howdy frightened.

“Yes sir.” he said hoping he sounded calm but his stomach was in knots.

He looked around once more with searching eyes, another drawn out period of silence followed.

“Is there anything you would like to share with me, Mr. Batemen?” he said tapping his pipe softly on his blazer.

Howdy wasn't sure if he was being tricked or not, he knew things most people knew about him things that could hardly be called a secret. The

man may have been doing this all week to people, hoping for a nervous set of lips that saw something, or maybe he knew what he was hiding and was just messing with his head. So he answered hoping it wasn't the latter of the two.

“No, sir. No aliens here.” he said trying to sound sincere.

He looked quickly at Howdy, eyeing him the way a cat eyes a mouse. In the end all he did was say good afternoon and head back to the car where the Sargent stood and opened the door for him without saluting. Sure they got the magic tin foil and the beam with funny symbols, but Bob said they were useless pieces of junk that were of materials no different than things found on Earth.

The cubes though, they were the treasure. He hid them for the first few years wrapped in an old blanket behind the preserves he kept in the cool dark basement, now they sat in a jewelry box he had given to his mother for a birthday present, in a dresser drawer. When she died after a bout with double pneumonia in the 1934, he and his younger brother Sam received a few thousand dollars selling the house and farm they lived in.

Eager for a change of scenery, they bought an old pick up and took turns driving two

4

thirds of the way across America from Erie, PA, until they got to the state of New Mexico.

“Why here?” Sam asked him.

He looked at the sign welcoming them to the state of New Mexico and said:” I dunno, something new.” he said with a laugh.

Sam, several years his junior, trusted his older brother. They settled in the town of Roswell and they had a good life their, Sam found a woman he was head over heels about and eventually married her after serving in the Army during the second World War. Howdy had been with a few women but had never taken the big plunge.

He was content with his little piece of land, raising chickens and selling their eggs as he had done in Erie for years. Sam embraced the the good life took college courses with the GI bill and became an accountant. Sam was brilliant with numbers and people but if anyone asked Sam who was the smarter of the two, he would have said Howdy.

Though not as sociable as Sam, he was good with cars and machines. Neighbors would go to him with their car or truck or appliance when they were acting up. He could fix nearly any problem with his vast array of tools, anything he couldn't was usually beyond repair anyway.

The cry of a rooster from the neighboring farm brought Howdy out of his memory. He walked over to the nightstand and paged through the manuscript, there was still a lot he had to write down yet. He was still waiting on Bob, the ships only passenger, who promised Howdy he would be in contact no matter where he ended up.

Bob had no body when he first arrived, but eventually Howdy helped him to get one so he could search for the other cubes. Howdy always had the cubes, Bob would send messages to the cubes with Morse code which blinked from the beige material that covered it like a bow wrapped around a present. Howdy learned Morse code as a child in the Boy Scouts which was cake for him to use. But then in early 1992, he received a message which stated: get PC will contact you through electronic mail, will be secure and faster.

“What the frig is electronic mail?” he said after writing out the message.

5

Sam's daughter Patty Ann, who resided in New Mexico, had brought along her son Quake. He was an odd boy who would talk sometimes using strange words and phrases, the doctors told his mother he was Autistic, but he was smarter than most kids his age.

“Hey Patty,” he asked her during her customary visits that had become more frequent when Sam, her father, died.

It was about a month after his last message from Bob.

“do you know what electronic mail is?”

Before she could answer, Quake was staring at the wall as if hypnotized but came running into the kitchen when he heard the question.

“It's short for E-mail.” he said happily.

He raised his eyebrows, he was only thirteen, but looked younger with a thin pair of glasses covering his cherub like face.

“Really?” Howdy asked surprised by the boy's knowledge.

“Yuppers!” he said with a smile that was crooked but sweet.

His mother put an arm around the young boy, his doctors also said he was emotionally stunted but she loved him just the same as her sister, Sue Ellen loved her son Abe.

“You can trust him, Uncle Howdy, he got rid of a computer sickness in my card drive.”

“Agwa, mom it was a computer virus in a hard drive.” he said rolling his eyes.

Howdy chuckled and said: “Well I've been thinking about getting a computer, do you think you could help me set it up, Quake?”

6

“Gakwa.”

“Quake, say the right word.” his mother said tenderly.

“Yes, I can do it Uncle Howdy.”

And he did too, Howdy paid a few hundred dollars at a Radio Shack with money from Social Security and within two hours Quake was surfing the Internet and giving Howdy a quick overview of how to use AOL and few pieces of software. Howdy though it would take a wizard a thousand years to learn all this stuff but he picked it up quicker than anyone else born before World War Two might have.

For many many years it more often then not a one sided conversation of Morse code that he could only receive. Telling Howdy where he was and if he had found any cubes, which he had yet to do. Once on line they’d talk in a private AOL chat room titled ‘Illegal Aliens Hideout, a joke Howdy thought was too on the nose but he trusted Bob like Sam trusted him.

They would chat usually for an hour once every two weeks, but in 1998 he stopped hearing from Bob. That was four years ago, the ‘hideout’ was still deserted, he was diagnosed with lung cancer only a year or so ago ,though the quacks in butchers smocks told him he had at the outside six months to live.

He laughed at their ineptitude as he crept slowly downstairs with his oxygen tank encased in a whited plastic tube. He didn’t always need it but he was panting heavily when he finally reached his living room desk and sat down in front of his PC. On the desktop was a picture of Quake and his cousin Abe arms about each others shoulders wearing their

graduation gowns, Quake with the same crooked smile, and Abe with a grin that radiated confidence.

He had assumed a boy with such brains would have lots of friends. But he had the hardest time getting along with the other kids, so his parents paid to send him to a Catholic school. The only friend he had was his cousin Abe, they were about the same age but rarely saw each other since Sue Ellen, Patty's sister moved to Porter a small town outside of Philadelphia before Abe was born.

When the private school was not faring any better for Quake, Patty and her husband moved to Porter when he started high school.

7

“I think it's what would be best,” Patty told Uncle Howdy one night in 1996.

“Quake always adored Abe. From what I understand Abe's had a few bullying problems as well.”

“I think you should, Patty. He needs friends.” Howdy said knowing he might not see them as much anymore, but hopeful it would help Quake.

When he found out he was dying, he went to Sam's lawyer, who took care of his brothers estate when he passed on, and asked to have a will made up. In it he gave everything to his nephews, the house, the land and most importantly his mothers jewelry box that held the cubes.

He felt bad when he did it, knowing it might take up their entire lives like it did his. He hoped it was the right thing to do, he had done what he could with the time he had but it still wasn't enough. He felt deep regret over the isolation he put himself through too keep this secret. Had I ever told them how important friends were? He asked himself.

“No, I didn't.” he said in a raspy voice.

He told them trust was a hard thing to come by, that was something he told them both time and time again. It was hardly sound advice, he thought looking back at all the years gone by, with no wife or children or close friends to speak of, Sam would sometimes scold him for his distance that had come from Howdy after his visit from the man with the icy stare. Sam didn't know what he found, but still tried to keep close to him and asked his daughters to do the same before he died. They were always close growing up and was dumb founded by Howdy's attempts to keep a distance between himself and his family.

He felt his heart wretch at the memories of years gone by keeping everyone away. When Sam died of a heart attack Patty Anne started visiting every week even if Howdy said he was too busy.

“Well, I'll just sit here until you have the time then.” she said sitting down and taking out a thick book to read while waiting.

8

He relented, and was glad for it in the end, but that was years ago when he still had contact with Bob and hadn't found out about his cancer. Now

Bob was stuck somewhere, he was dying and no one else knew about the cubes, not in this universe at least. He looked at the picture of his nephews again, hoping they would lead fuller lives but not believing they would.

He wanted a cigarette, he still longed for them when he was nervous or upset, he felt both now. He got up hurriedly and went back to the stairs leading up to his bedroom, anxious to write more down thinking of all the things that he hadn't included, things he should have added besides the technical jargon. In his haste he tripped over the clear tubes that gave him oxygen and fell with a bone cracking thud. The tube pulled out and a faint hiss emanated from the tank like a snake, he let out a cry of pain that was more of a breathless whimper.

His lungs felt like a balloon that wouldn't inflate no matter how hard you blew, he could taste blood in his mouth it was a coppery, unpleasant taste. He choked for a few seconds as he tried to take air in, his face as red as the morning sun began to turn blue as he looked up at his desktop where AM and Quake were pictured. His last thoughts were of them, hoping they would find friends that would help them during the trying times that were ahead.

Qcalc Coordinates 40.02790-75.26769
Porter, PA 01_11_2010

Doug "Dig" Robins sat in a recliner that was new twenty years ago. A heavy glass ashtray filled with cigarettes sat lopsided in the wears of the chairs' arm. He spent the last couple of days drinking, two cases of Coors, and a half bottle of Smirnoff, then spent the following two days working the liquor off not bothering to eat more than a few sticks of beef

jerky he had purchased at the same store he bought the case of beer and vodka.

He was high school educated work horse that drank too much and had no direction. Spending the last few years working eight hours at the Eco-frig factory making lining for refrigerator and freezer doors and coolers, seven fifty an hour after 90 days probation. Then ten more hours doing the graveyard shift at the local UPS loading packages two or three nights a week and some weekend nights for fifty cents more.

Other weekends he tended the bar at McCully's a local watering hole, that he'd spent more time at than he'd like to admit. After that he would be back at Eco-fridge or pumping gas at the Time Kill gas station on Independence avenue. Work was work, he did not liked the jobs (McCully's was OK) but they paid.

9

Camille, his live in girlfriend, came out from the bedroom they shared, her reddish brown hair flying behind her as she made her way past him. She wore skin tight jeans and a sleeveless black blouse trimmed with black lace, a spring time blouse, but the weather tonight was springlike for January. Her perfume, something sweet and flowery filled his nose, he turned his head as she passed him too use the small bathroom or powder room

as she would often call it.

He made an attempt to apologize again, but seeing him in the mirror she huffed and kicked the door shut with out turning around. He faced

forward again, a vodka bottle sitting in between his legs, turning it with his fingers. He looked to the wall on his left where a large mirror framed in wood hung slightly off center.

He stared at his reflection looking at the drunken slob that stared back at him, he ran his fingers through his shaggy blond hair that was greasy. Girls had loved his shade of hair.

"Strawberry blond" he said to his reflection.

He was six feet tall and once had an athletic build he earned through rigorous high school sports. The reflection tonight showed a man in wrinkled work shirt and chino's with a belt buckle that held in a large belly that had once been six pack abs that girls wanted to touch almost as much as his hair when he was younger.

Dig doubted a better body would appease Cammie tonight, a half mile from home the car they owned began to thump harshly somewhere in the the engine. When he turned on Cedar street, a puff of black smoke poured out from under the hood, forcing him to pull it over to the curb. He was still pissed when she got home, and when Cammie began grinding her teeth in anger saying it was his fault, he exploded by shouting a word in her ear that made her pale Irish face turn red.

He didn't know square one about cars, nor did Cammie, who needed the car more than he did, she was a hairs breath from being manger of a Citibank branch in downtown Philadelphia. Septa ran bus routes too and

from Porter to the city, but it was an hour long ride on I-76 on the Expressway. By car even during rush hour traffic the ride was quicker.

It was hard to keep the venomous statements on his tongue from leaving his lips

10

sometimes. They hadn't had sex for a while and it made him all the more aggravated. She made more money and worked less hours, he had to keep three or four jobs just to keep up his side of the rent.

The house they rented was not a shack but needed work, it was much better than the trailer he had grown up in. If Dig fixed up parts of the tiny one story home, money would be knocked off the rent. This relationship was reminding Dig of his last serious girlfriend Jennifer Babitz.

Dig was clueless about certain things in life. He was not dumb, just lacked direction. The door to the little bathroom opened again, with lips shining a dull pink Cammie flicked it off and came out.

He felt her eyes on him, as he fiddled the cap on the bottle of vodka, twisting the bottle that sat between his thighs making the label swirl. She stood in front of him looking down at him on the chair, her eyes filled with fire. He looked up at her, a migraine was starting making his eyes blur.

"What are you going to do about the car?" she asked in a tight voice.

Dig looked at her for a second before answering.

"And what would you have me do?" he asked Her eyes rolled back in disgust.

"Fix the fuckin thing you dumb ass."

She called him worse things, this fight was so far tame by comparison to what usually occurred though no one had ever called the cops because of it, but Dig was afraid someone would eventually.

"Cam...hun..."

"Don't hun me you fuck!!! All the guys in the world I date the one who can't fix a fuckin car?!" she said it as if he were a mental defective.

11

The rage was seemingly there all the time now, he never struck her and never would, but would reprise with cutting remarks. He took a swig of the warm clear alcohol.

"Well I guess I can't count money as fast as you,"

That was pushing it, he knew it, she always made a deal about how fast she could count money, Dig would say she was faster than a hooker

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

